

**ARIZONA STATE PARKS
NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(NAPAC)**

Minutes of the meeting held:

Thursday, February 28, 2008

at:

the Sonoran Institute

7650 E. Broadway, #203, Tucson, AZ

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Hare called the meeting to order at 12:12pm. The following people were present, and the Committee achieved a quorum.

Committee Members Present: Trevor Hare, Chair
Sheridan Stone, Vice-Chair
Linda Kennedy
John Hays
Phyllis Hughes
Don Young
Jared Underwood

Committee Members Absent: None

Other Individuals Present: Max Castillo, ASP (*ex-officio*)
Joanne Roberts, Arizona State Parks (ASP)
Joy Hernbrode, Assistant Attorney General for ASP (*via phone*)
Ray Warriner, ASP
Ruth Shulman, ASP

Guest: None

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

Members and Staff introduced themselves.

C. OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of NAPAC Minutes for the November 29, 2007 meeting.

Mr. Stone submitted minor corrections via eMail. Ms. Shulman noted that these corrections had been made. Chair Hare noted that the word "Ailanthus" on page 8 should be capitalized as that represents the generic name, rather than the specific name for a group of plants. Mr. Hays moved that the minutes be approved as revised. Mr. Stone seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

2. Update and Discussion on Rio Rico/Ross parcels on the Santa Cruz River.

Mr. Warriner noted that he had discussed the Rio Rico parcels six weeks ago with Michael Patrick of the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and had no new developments to report. Additionally, Mr. Warriner said that he is planning to discuss the Ross parcels with Mr. Ross in the near future. Mr. Ross, for various reasons, may have dropped the price he was asking for those parcels. Mr. Warriner will provide further information at an upcoming meeting.

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Mr. Hays provided an updated draft of the Santa Cruz County floodplains (copy available on request) as of February 19, 2008. This information could be useful in evaluating available properties within Santa Cruz County. Further discussion on the floodplains and the floodway followed.

3. Update from NAPAC on next steps in the Kartchner Caverns Conservation Zone.

Dr. Casavant asked Ms. Roberts to assess NAPAC's readiness to make a presentation to the ASP Board regarding the Conservation Zone. Dr. Casavant's presentation is nearing completion. Chair Hare said that he, Ms. Roberts and Mr. Shein will meet to discuss any presentation to the ASP Board, and he requested that this item be placed on the agenda for the April full NAPAC meeting. Mr. Stone asked when the final report will be complete. Ms. Roberts said that the report would be a final "State of Information" for Kartchner Caverns State Park. The report should be final by the end of the current week. Mr. Stone said that the report will be important for future policy decisions. Chair Hare said that NAPAC might consider a new above ground site visit. Ms. Roberts said that there has been a good deal of information already gathered on the above ground biota, which can be supplied to NAPAC members prior to the final report. Ms. Hughes asked if the report would be large enough to include an executive summary and some recommendations. Ms. Roberts said that the report would be 20-30 pages long and will include the summary and recommendations. Chair Hare will put together a list of questions for the ASP Board regarding Kartchner Caverns discussions.

4. Discussion with Joy Hernbrode on Subcommittee formation, quorums, meeting notices and Staff participation in Subcommittees.

Ms. Hernbrode clarified the "rules" regarding subcommittees. She noted that a subcommittee can consist of any members officially appointed, including ASP staff or outside experts. She did advise exercising caution in appointing members from outside the main committee, because all officially appointed subcommittee members can vote on the business of the subcommittee. Also, all officially appointed members count toward forming a quorum of the subcommittee. (A quorum consists of 50% of the membership, plus one.)

ASP Staff can be appointed to subcommittees as official members, and can therefore count toward quorum. Ms. Hernbrode also suggested that caution again be exercised when appointing members from within the membership of the larger committee; too many members will also constitute a quorum of the main committee, which can create issues in providing proper public notice under the Open Meeting Law. As a matter of procedure, the notice and agenda should contain wording that "a quorum of NAPAC may be present." In addition, the notice and agenda should contain a Public Comment section to allow invited experts and others their forum. Staff members can participate in subcommittee meetings by providing knowledge and assistance but do not have to be officially appointed unless the subcommittee wants Staff to count toward quorum and/or vote. Members of the larger who attend Subcommittee committees cannot vote or count toward Subcommittee quorum.

Ms. Hernbrode continued by suggesting that NAPAC make it absolutely clear who are the officially appointed members of the subcommittees. This will facilitate setting quorums, voting and conducting the business of the Subcommittee in general.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. New Travel Policies.

Ms. Shulman presented the new Arizona State government travel reimbursement policies. This involves members filling out new forms so that they can be entered into the employee payroll system in order to have travel claims paid. The members need to complete several forms pertinent to employees. Ms. Shulman also explained the new travel claim form, which is very like the old form. The new emphasis is on whether the state-related travel includes an overnight stay. She also explained that at a future meeting, members will need to comply with the Federal I-9 documentation rules as part of the Movement from vendor payment to employee payment systems.

2. Election of new NAPAC officers for 2008.

The members considered electing a new Chair and Vice-Chair to serve for 2008. Dr. Kennedy nominated Chair Hare to continue in that position. Dr. Young seconded the nomination. Mr. Stone nominated himself to serve as Chair. (*Note to Joanne: I do not hear a second for the self-nomination on the tape at all.*) Following discussion of the candidates' qualifications and meeting management styles, NAPAC voted 4-3 to retain Chair Hare in that position.

Dr. Young nominated Mr. Stone to retain the position of Vice-Chair, which passed unanimously.

NAPAC's officers for 2008 are: Trevor Hare, Chair and Sheridan Stone, Vice-Chair.

3. Brief Presentation on Critical Habitat Values for the Verde River Greenway (VRG).

Mr. Castillo presented information on Critical Habitats for several species using a GIS overlay program. His intent was to help prioritize property selection by using the available information on critical habitats for plants, animals and invertebrates when considering land in the VRG. (Information on critical habitat is furnished from the Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD), and the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS).) Mr. Castillo's presentation highlighted critical habitat for individual species along the river, and showed where species overlap occurs as well as where species do not occur. He also highlighted areas recently visited by the Land Acquisition and Prioritization Subcommittee (LAPS) for species/habitats in order to correlate the information.

Mr. Underwood asked if the fish species actually occurred in the VRG area. Following discussion, Mr. Underwood will find out which species occur where in the area from the AGFD and report back to NAPAC. Further discussion on the properties visited by LAPS followed and the discussion moved to that agenda item. (NAPAC adjourned for a brief break at 1:26pm and reconvened at 1:38pm.)

E. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Natural Areas Management Guidelines (NAMG) committee: Update and report on progress.

No report given in the interest of time.

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2. Land Acquisition and Prioritization Subcommittee discusses Charter and recommendations for Verde River area parcels.

Ms. Roberts presented the new Charter for the Subcommittee and asked for input from NAPAC. Mr. Warriner suggested changing the status of Staff from Subcommittee members to advisors to follow the advice provided by Ms. Hernbrode earlier. Chair Hare's status as a Subcommittee member was also dropped, partly to take advantage of the Phoenix location of the remaining three official members.

Mr. Sheridan asked about the definition of the Subcommittee's scope in the Charter. He would like to see some simplified language, showing the focus as prioritizing evaluated properties. He is also concerned about the Subcommittee's ability to change evaluation criteria as noted in section D. Ms. Roberts noted that the intent of that language is allow members to review the criteria, but not to make changes without the approval of the full NAPAC. Mr. Sheridan asked about the definition of the terms prioritization, identification and evaluation. Ms. Roberts defined prioritization as a process that will allow NAPAC to choose properties from among the many available based on scientific, financial and ASP criteria. She defined identification as how an available property comes to the attention of ASP and/or NAPAC. Evaluation is defined as considering the property's natural attributes scientifically. Ms. Hughes suggested that a "senior" member of NAPAC should be a part of the Subcommittee to provide a historical/big picture view.

Mr. Castillo asked whether prioritization should be a "moving target". Mr. Sheridan said it should be, but that a set process will help with tracking available properties and justifying eventual decisions. Mr. Underwood asked about how prioritization would work as a "weighted" decision. Further discussion followed on the many sources of weighting factors to make decisions. Chair Hare also noted that having a prioritization process will help provide the ASP Board with the best advice, and to allow the ASP Board to broaden their view of what constitutes a Natural Area. Mr. Stone noted that the process of acquiring property requires a set of "tools" and that the Subcommittee will be designing the tools appropriate to the task at hand. Further discussion followed on the task of the Subcommittee, and it's relevance to the work of NAPAC.

Mr. Castillo asked about the focal points of the Charter, including the management of acquired property. Further discussion on management and prioritization followed. Dr. Kennedy suggested that the focus say that the property should be listed as "manageable" instead of saying that ASP will only acquire property it can manage. Discussion on the definition of management followed, as well as how to rate that particular factor. Using the direction provided by NAPAC at this meeting, the Subcommittee will refine the details of the Charter, which can be updated as necessary in the future.

Ms. Roberts noted that changes to the Charter should be completed now so that the Subcommittee can begin to "settle" the process at their meeting scheduled in March. The changes to be made are: changing the official membership of the Subcommittee, remove focal point number 3, assuring that the Subcommittee changes the evaluation process only with NAPAC's input and permission, adding a date for renewing the Charter if necessary, and retaining the April "deliverable date" as a target pending further Subcommittee meetings.

NAPAC next considered the acquisition recommendations for those parcels visited and evaluated at the January Subcommittee field trip. Ms. Roberts noted that Chuck Ohr, ASP's

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water-quality expert, is reviewing the water information currently available on the Peck's Lake property, but does not have enough information available to help NAPAC's decision.

Mr. Warriner suggested reviewing the Spur/Babbitt property. Mr. Castillo noted that the Babbitt family has withdrawn the property from sale. Ms. Roberts said that the property should be discussed and prioritized in any case because it may become available again in the future. She also noted that according to the evaluation sheets, there was no particularly outstanding or unique feature on the property. The evaluation ratings were "B" for the property's condition and "A" for the natural features. Mr. Stone asked whether the cultivated field noted on the property was included. After further discussion, it was felt that the field is included, could be allowed to go fallow, and serve as a buffer to the VRG project area. NAPAC also decided that the committee should also prioritize the properties recommended to the ASP Board. Those properties that rate an "A" on the evaluation sheet will be the top priority; those rated "B" will be second tier priorities. The Spur Land and Cattle/Babbitt property discussion was set-aside for the moment.

Chair Hare asked that the committee consider the property listed as "Wade 2". Ms. Roberts noted that this property was part of the original scope of the VRG purchase, and has been re-evaluated by ASP for the past several years. Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board the purchase of the 3-acre parcel identified as Wade 2 contiguous to the Verde River Greenway properties and the US Forest Service based on previous recommendations to the Arizona State Parks Board, but was overlooked during the original Verde River Greenway State Natural Area acquisition, and further recommend that it be managed under the Verde River Greenway management plan. Dr. Young seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion. Ms. Hughes asked that the status of payment for the property be clarified, as it may have already been paid for during the original acquisition. Mr. Warriner will look into the question, but his feeling is that this parcel remained unpaid for originally.

NAPAC moved on to consider the parcels known as UVX1 and UVX2. Both parcels have buffering value and are on the railroad cut. Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board purchase the parcels known as UVX1 and UVX2 for buffering of the Verde River Greenway State Natural Area, and also for potential incorporation into the greater non-motorized trail system of the Verde Valley. Dr. Young seconded. Mr. Stone asked about the width of the property, which was agreed to be 100'. Mr. Castillo said that he did not believe the property itself is developable, but it could be used to build an access road to surrounding areas. Further discussion followed on the various ways a right-of-way on the property might be obtained by a road builder. Mr. Warriner said that the comparable properties, used to help set property values, may make this property slightly costlier than other undevelopable land in the area. Mr. Stone asked about the inclusion of language regarding the Verde Valley trail system. Chair Hare noted that mentioning a trail possibility would help make the property eligible for trail funding for management. Chair Hare called for the vote, which carried with no further discussion.

It was noted that no evaluation score was assigned to the UVX 1-2 properties; these properties are recommended for their buffering and wildlife corridor values. Chair Hare said that the committee could make a separate motion to the ASP Board giving the prioritization of the recommended acquisitions. Further discussion on prioritization and the ASP Board followed.

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Chair Hare said that the remaining four properties under discussion shared the importance of being in the river corridor and having critical habitat value. He suggested moving the parcels individually with identical language to reflect that shared importance. NAPAC came to a consensus on the language following brief discussion.

Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board the purchase of the Fratelli-Mongini parcel because it is within the river corridor of the Verde River Greenway project area and has critical habitat for endangered species. Mr. Hays seconded the motion. Chair Hare noted that the evaluation does not include Mingus Mountain. Chair Hare called for the vote, which carried with no further discussion.

Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board the purchase of the Wade 1 and UVX 3 parcels because they are within the river corridor of the Verde River Greenway project area and have critical habitat for endangered species. Dr. Young seconded the motion. Chair Hare noted that there were some invasive plant species in the understory. (Mr. Hays left the meeting at this time.) Chair Hare called for the vote, which carried with no further discussion.

Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board the purchase of the Barteau 1 and Barteau 2 parcels because they are within the river corridor of the Verde River Greenway project area and have critical habitat for endangered species. Mr. Underwood seconded the motion. Discussion centered on the cottonwood trees and the active floodplain. Chair Hare called for the vote, which carried with no further discussion.

Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board the purchase of the Bustamente 1-4 and Barteau 3-4 parcels because they are within the river corridor of the Verde River Greenway project area and have critical habitat for endangered species. Dr. Young seconded the motion. Discussion centered on buffering from development. These properties rated low among all the properties discussed. Dr. Kennedy noted that there were cottonwood trees down for no discernable reason; it may be a hydrological process. Chair Hare called for the vote, which carried with no further discussion.

Discussion on prioritizing the acquisitions followed. NAPAC's consensus was to use a tier system to prioritize the parcels discussed, with the first tier representing the highest priority and on through tier three.

Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board the purchase of the Spur Land and Cattle 1-3 parcels because they are within the river corridor of the Verde River Greenway project area and have critical habitat for endangered species and also have important connectivity to the USFS, SRP SWFL mitigation property, and the Symington properties already purchased as well as buffering for the floodplain. Mr. Underwood seconded the motion. Chair Hare noted that there was some onsite dumping and "berming". Mr. Underwood also said that these parcels are located further from human habitation than others. Chair Hare called for the vote, which carried with no further discussion.

Chair Hare moved that the Arizona State Parks Board consider the following prioritization for property acquisition with the tier one properties, Wade 2, Fratelli-Mongini, UVX 3 and Barteau 1-4 and Spur Land and Cattle being the highest priority; the tier two properties, Bustamente 1-4, being the second priority; and the tier three properties, UVX 1-2, being the lowest priority. Dr. Kennedy seconded the motion. Mr. Castillo noted that the Selna-Mongini

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parcel had not been included in the discussion, and is an important parcel. Chair Hare rescinded his motion with the agreement of Dr. Kennedy.

Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board the purchase of the Selna-Mongini 1-2 parcels because they are within the river corridor of the Verde River Greenway project area and have critical habitat for endangered species, as well as upland buffering. Dr. Young seconded the motion. Chair Hare called for the vote following discussion on the railroad cut on the parcel. The motion carried.

Chair Hare moved that the Arizona State Parks Board consider the following prioritization for property acquisition with the tier one properties, Wade 2, Fratelli-Mongini, Selna-Mongini 1-2, UVX 3 and Barteau 1-4 and Spur Land and Cattle being the highest priority; the tier two properties, Bustamente 1-4, being the second priority; and the tier three properties, UVX 1-2, being the lowest priority. Dr. Kennedy seconded the motion. Chair Hare called for the vote, which passed 5-0 with Ms. Hughes abstaining.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

G. BOARD COMMENTS, REQUESTS, AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Chair Hare noted that a letter signed by several environmental groups regarding off-highway vehicles had been sent to the Arizona State Parks Board. Chair Hare was signatory to the letter in his position as Landscape Restoration Director for Sky Island Alliance. Carry-over items: Update on hunting from Ms. Hernbrode as fits her schedule, update on Kartchner Caverns SP Conservation Zone, introduction of Genevieve Johnson and discussion of Open Space.

H. TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

This item not discussed in the interest of time, however the next scheduled Subcommittee meetings are March 27, 2008.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hare adjourned the meeting at 4:00pm.

Prepared by Ruth Shulman on February 5, 2008, and reviewed by Joanne M. Roberts, Arizona State Parks NAPAC Coordinator.

APPROVED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON April 24, 2008.

Affirmed by:

/s/ Trevor Hare _____
Trevor Hare, Chair

Date: April 24, 2008 _____